

REMARKS

Applicant, his principal representatives in Germany, and the undersigned have carefully reviewed the second, non-final Office Action of September 13, 2007 in the subject U.S. patent application, together with the prior art cited and relied on. In response, the Substitute Specification and claims of the application have been amended in an effort to more clearly patentably define the present invention over the prior art cited and relied on in the rejections of the claims. It is believed that the claims now pending in the subject patent application are patentable over the prior art cited and relied on, taken either singly or in combination. Reexamination and reconsideration of the application, and allowance of the claims is respectfully requested.

As recited in currently amended claim 70, as depicted in the drawings filed with the application, and as described in the Substitute Specification, as filed and as currently amended, the subject invention is directed to a printing blanket and that is positionable on a printing blanket cylinder of a printing press. Fig. 4 shows the printing blanket unit situated on the surface of such a printing blanket cylinder, generally at 05.

As may be seen in Figs. 1-3, the printing blanket unit includes a dimensionally stable support plate which includes a plate central element 07 with a plate exterior surface, and leading and trailing support plate ends 04 and 06. The support plate ends are formed at an angle with respect to the plate exterior surface, as may be seen in Fig. 2 and, once formed at such an angle, form leading and trailing printing securement legs 04 and 06. Such a structure is generally conventional in the art. Fold zones 08 and 09 are located at the transition of the plate central element and the respective leading and trailing printing blanket unit securement legs 04 and 06. A printing blanket, generally at 03, is attached to the plate exterior surface of the plate central element. This printing blanket has printing blanket ends 11, 12 that are spaced apart in a longitudinal direction of the printing blanket. The printing blanket also has a printing blanket exterior surface.

A filler material 14, 13 is placed at each of the fold zones 08, 09 of the respective securement legs 04, 06. This filler material 14, 13 is secured to the fold zones 08, 09, and is engaging a respective one of the printing blanket ends 11, 12. The filler material 14, 13 of each fold zone 08, 09 extends from its respective one of the fold zones in the longitudinal direction of the printing blanket at a length greater than 0.1 mm.

When the printing blanket unit is mounted on the printing blanket cylinder, as depicted in Fig. 4, the filler material 14, 13 on each of the fold zones 08, 09 of the leading and trailing securement legs 04, 06 is out of contact with the filler material on the other one of the fold zones. The ends of the printing blanket are also out of contact with each other, again as can be seen in Fig. 4 and as is also depicted in Figs. 3 and 12.

In a review of the Substitute Specification, during the preparation of this Second Amendment, several minor inconsistencies and typographical errors were noted. With respect to the Field of the Invention section and the Summary of the Invention section, there were several sentences where the description of the invention was not consistent with the Description of the Preferred Embodiments and the drawings. These inconsistencies were introduced during the translation of the German language text of the application, and the revision of that translation by the undersigned. It is believed that the changes proposed to the above-discussed two sections of the Substitute Specification rectify these minor inconsistencies, without the addition of any new matter and conform those descriptions to the rest of the Substitute Specification and to the drawings. Several typographical errors were also noted, primarily in the Description of the Preferred Embodiments. These are believed to have occurred during the preparation of the Substitute Specification from the Marked-Up copy of the PCT application. The correction of those minor typographical errors is also believed not to raise any issues of new matter. Their entry into the Substitute Specification is respectfully requested.

In the second, non-final Office Action of September 13, 2007, claim 123 was objected to as being informal. That claim has now been cancelled. Such cancellation is believed to render

the Examiner's objection to that claim moot.

Claims 70-84, 86, 87, 113, 114 and 116 were rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over newly cited U.S. patent No. 5,125,337 to Zeller. It was asserted that Zeller teaches a printing blanket unit having a support plate 4, leading and trailing plate ends, a printing blanket 5 and a filler material 7, 8. It was asserted that the filler material 7, 8 engages at least one end of the printing blanket and extends radially past a vertical exterior of the printing blanket exterior surface and extending from the at least one end of the printing blanket in a longitudinal direction of the printing blanket.

Claims 111 and 115 were rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Zeller in view of U.S. patent No. 5,351,615 to Kobler. Claim 112 was rejected under 35 USC 103(a) over Zeller in view of Kobler and further in view of U.S. patent No. 4,452,142 to Heinemann. Claims 119-122 were rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Zeller in view of U.S. patent No. 5,090,319 over Weber. Claims 88 and 89 were allowed.

As set forth in the Office Action, Examiner Culler and the undersigned discussed the subject application on August 29, 2007. That discussion was in response to the Amendment filed May 17, 2007. That Amendment was filed in response to the Examiner's indication of allowable subject matter, in the Office Action of April 23, 2007. During that discussion, and as set forth in the Office Action of September 13, 2007, it was the understanding of the Examiner that the subject matter of claim 1 (believed to be claim 70 of the application) was not, in fact, directed to the embodiment of Fig. 12 but was instead directed to the embodiment of Fig. 11. As a result of that discussion, the prior indicated allowance of claim 85, whose limitations had been included in claim 70 in the Amendment of May 17, 2007, was withdrawn.

In the Response to the Restriction Requirement of January 9, 2007, applicant elected to prosecute the claims identified as Group I; i.e. claims 70-89, 111-116 and 119-123, drawn to a printing blanket unit having a filler material on at least a portion of a support plate. It is the intent of this Amendment that claim 70 be considered a generic claim which reads on all of the

disclosed and depicted embodiments of the subject invention, with the exception of the embodiment which is depicted in Fig. 5. To further that intent, claim 70 and various ones of the claims pending in the application have been amended. Other claims have been cancelled.

Allowed claims 88 and 89 have been carried forward.

With the exception of allowed claim 88, independent claim 70 is the sole independent claim now pending in the application. Accordingly, the bulk of the discussion of the rejections of the claims as being unpatentable over the Zeller reference, taken either singly or in combination with one or more of the secondary references, will be directed to that claim.

As discussed previously, claim 70 recites a printing blanket unit having a dimensionally stable support plate 02 including a plate central element 07 and with leading and trailing support plate ends 04, 06. The plate ends 04, 06 are each formed at an angle with respect to the plate exterior surface and form leading and trailing printing blanket and securement legs, also identified at 04 and 06, and depicted in Fig. 2.

Fold zones 08 and 09 are located at the transitions of the plate control element and the legs. A printing blanket 03 is fastened on the plate exterior surface and has ends 11, 12 that are spaced apart in a longitudinal direction of the blanket. The printing blanket also has an exterior surface.

A filler material 14, 13 is situated on at least a portion of each of the support plate ends 04, 06 and is secured to the fold zones 08, 09. The filler material 14, 13 on each of the respective fold zones 08, 09 extends from the fold zone in the longitudinal direction of the printing blanket at a length of at least 0.1 mm. When the printing blanket is mounted on the printing blanket cylinder, the filler material on one of the leading and trailing printing blanket unit securement legs is out of contact with the filler material on the other one of the securement legs. In addition, the printing blanket ends are out of contact with each other.

A review of the Zeller reference makes it quite clear that this prior art document does not render obvious the structure of the subject printing blanket unit, as set forth in currently

amended claim 70. As the Examiner will appreciate, the specification of the Zeller reference is difficult to interpret and is replete with reference numerals that are either not present in the drawings or that are used to identify multiple, distinct elements. As is depicted in Fig. 1a of Zeller, there is provided a rubber blanket, recited in Column 4, line 28 as being identified as element 3a. That reference numeral is not believed to be shown in Fig. 1a or in any of the other drawing figures. Rubber blanket 3a has a lower carrier surface, identified in the specification as 4a, and believed to be element 4 in Fig. 1a. A cover layer, identified in the specification as 5a and believed to be element 5 in Fig. 1a, is attached to the carrier surface 4a (4). That carrier surface 4a (4) has leading and trailing ends that are receivable in a cylinder groove 3 or 4.

Filler elements 7 and 8 are inserted into the grooves 3, 4 in an effort to dampen shocks that occur when the grooves 3, 4 of cooperating cylinders roll off against each other. Each of these filler elements 7, 8 is essentially T-shaped in cross-section and includes a leg whose inner end is supported on an inner end surface 9 of a respective one of the cylinder grooves 3, 4. As discussed in Column 3, lines 34-37 of the Zeller patent, these filler elements 7, 8 "...are inserted into the grooves to prevent or to dampen as much as possible shocks which occur as the cylinder grooves 3, 4 roll off against each other." (Emphasis added.)

It is quite clear that the filler elements 7, 8 of Zeller are not analogous in structure, function, or location to the filler material recited in currently amended claim 70. The filler elements 7, 8 of Zeller are insertable into and removable from the cylinder grooves 3, 4, which cylinder grooves are not to be confused with the rubber blanket 3a with its lower carrier surface 4a. The filler elements 7 and 8 of Zeller are not secured to the fold zones of the lower carrier surface 4a of the rubber blanket 3a of Zeller. Each filler element 7 or 8 of Zeller is a unitary structure which is inserted between the spaced apart plate end securement legs of the Zeller rubber blanket 3a and which is not secured to either fold zone, let alone being constituted by filler material on each of the two fold zones.

In the Zeller device, as is shown very clearly in Fig. 1a, when the filler elements 7, 8 are

inserted into the grooves 3, 4 of the respective cylinders 1, 2, they extend between the angled securement legs of each rubber blanket 3a. Claim 70, as currently amended, recites that when the printing blanket unit of the subject invention is applied to a printing blanket cylinder, the filler material on one of the fold zones is out of contact with the filler material on the other one of the fold zones or securement legs. Even a casual review of the Zeller reference clearly shows that each unitary filler element 7 or 8 is in contact with the fold zones of both of the securement legs when that filler element 7 or 8 is inserted into the cylinder grooves 3 or 4 of its respective cylinder 1 or 2. The filler elements 7 and 8 are also in contact with both ends of the cover layer 5a of the rubber blanket 3a when the rubber blanket 3a is in its use position and the filler element 7 or 8 has been inserted into its respective cylinder groove 3 or 4.

In the present invention, as recited in currently amended claim 70, the filler material is characterized as a support element which is secured to each of the fold zones and which is engaging a respective end of the printing blanket that is fastened on the exterior surface of the support plate. This structure is clearly different from the structure of the filler elements 7, 8 of Zeller. The single, unitary filler element, 7 or 8, which is inserted into a respective one of the cylinder grooves 3 or 4, is intended to be a filler between the two plate ends and to reduce the shock that occurs when two cooperating cylinders roll off against each other. The enlarged head of each such filler element 7, 8 engages the spaced ends of the cover layer 5a of the Zeller device. In contrast, in the present invention, the two separate filler materials do not contact each other and the ends of the blanket do not contact each other. The purpose of the filler elements of the subject invention, as recited in currently amended claim 70 is not to mitigate cylinder groove related shocks, as is the purpose of the Zeller device. It is thus clear that Zeller does not render obvious the subject invention, as recited in currently amended claim 70.

In the Examiner's Statement of Reasons for Allowance, set forth in connection with allowed claims 88 and 89, it was recited that the prior art does not teach or render obvious a printing blanket unit wherein the filler material on one end of the blanket is not connected with

the filler material on the other end of the blanket. This language is now part of currently amended claim 70. For this reason, it is further believed that currently amended claim 70 is not rendered unpatentable by the prior art cited and relied on.

The several secondary references cited and relied on, in combination with the primary Zeller reference, in the rejections of various ones of the dependent claims, have been reviewed. None of these secondary references is believed to show the features of believed patentable, currently amended claim 70. In Kobler, there is shown an offset blanket for a grooveless blanket cylinder. Since Kobler is usable with a cylinder without grooves, it cannot have the zone folds recited in claim 70. The blanket includes a carrier plate and a rubber layer placed on top of it. Both of these are connected to each other. The mere disclosure of a carrier plate and a rubber layer in Kobler does not render it analogous to, or combinable with the present invention.

The Heinemann reference is directed to an offset printing blanket that includes multiple layers. Inner ones of these layers include adhesive included so that the blanket is adhered to the offset printing cylinder by an adhesive cooperation. Again, such a device is not readily combinable with the subject invention, as recited in currently amended claim 70.

The Weber patent shows a gap strip that is positionable in the cylinder gap of a printing unit cylinder. As such, it is similar, in overall concept to the Zeller device. In the Weber device, it is the gap strips, which are insertable and removable independently, with respect to the printing blanket and printing forme, that dampen vibrations. The Weber structure is thus not able to provide the teachings of the present invention, as recited in currently amended claim 70 which are missing from the Zeller reference. It is thus believed that all of the claims which are now pending in the subject U.S. patent application are allowable over the prior art cited and relied on, taken either singly or in combination.

SUMMARY

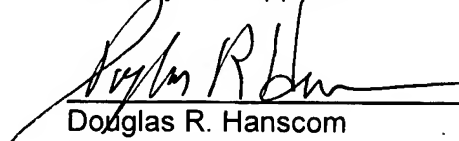
The Substitute Specification of the subject U.S. patent application has been amended to correct minor inconsistencies and to correct various typographical errors. These changes and corrections do not constitute any new matter.

Various ones of the claims pending in the application have been amended. Allowed claims 88 and 89 have been carried forward. It is believed that all of the claims now pending in the subject application are in condition for allowance. Such action, and the passage of the application to issue, is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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